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## WILLIAMS AS AN EXPONENT OF GAG LAW

Spectacle Humiliating to Democratic Party Enacted by Leader on Floor of House.

The New York American, published the following account of the tilt between Congressman William B. Lamar, of Florida, and John Sharp Williams, the minority leader on the floor of the house of representatives:

A spectacle at once extraordinary and humiliating to the democrats of the country was presented in the house to-day when Representative John Sharp Williams, leader of the minority, gazed a fellow democrat, Judge W. B. Lamar, of Florida, who wanted to make a personal explanation in reply to statements charging Mr. Lamar with bad faith, and attributed to Representative Williams.

No precedent to the incident is recalled. On the contrary, Mr. Williams did not object to one democrat attacking another, when Mr. Williams's objection would have saved his "leadership" much trouble and discredit.

The republican members, whose opinion was voiced by Representative Seneca E. Payne, of New York, were in favor of fair play, but Representative Williams was not to be generally understood that Judge Lamar was particularly anxious to resent before the house printed imputations of Mr. Williams and demand from him an explanation and retraction.

Mr. Williams put his objection on the ground that he did not want to have the democratic line washed in the presence of the republicans. As a matter of fact what Judge Lamar wanted to do was to wash what he regarded as the political linen of Mr. Williams and not of the democrats as a party.

Predetermined by Mr. Williams. The cause of the dramatic incident in the house to-day was the prearrangement of Mr. Williams, who, as "leader" of the minority, has the suggestion of names for committees, to oust Representatives Lamar and D. W. Shackleford, of Missouri, from the committee on interstate commerce.

While members of that committee, Lamar and Shackleford came to the conclusion that the railway rate regulation bill of Representative Hearst, was the best measure before the house, and so voted in the committee for the Hearst bill.

Mr. Williams, as "floor leader," decided early in the last session to introduce a bill in place of the Hearst bill. A caucus was called ostensibly to determine whether Mr. Williams should resign, as his party did not stand behind him in the General Miles amendment; but instead of resigning he precipitated on the caucus the ill-prepared, two-section Davey railway rate bill and endeavored to have the caucus swallow it whole. Mr. Williams, himself, however, amended the Davey bill in many important particulars after the caucus, and again tried to amend it on the floor of the house by adding numerous extracts from the Hearst bill. Mr. Lamar and Mr. Shackleford merely claimed the same right Williams had exercised to agree on any bill they selected, and they voted for and otherwise sustained the Hearst bill.

That doomed Messrs. Lamar and Shackleford. It appears that in a letter to Mr. Lamar from Mr. Williams the latter had said "insulting" things about Mr. Hearst. Mr. Lamar's charge to that effect is printed in the Washington papers to-day and is regarded as the motive for the proposed removal of Judge Lamar and Mr. Shackleford from the committee; that because they preferred Mr. Hearst's bill to the Davey bill.

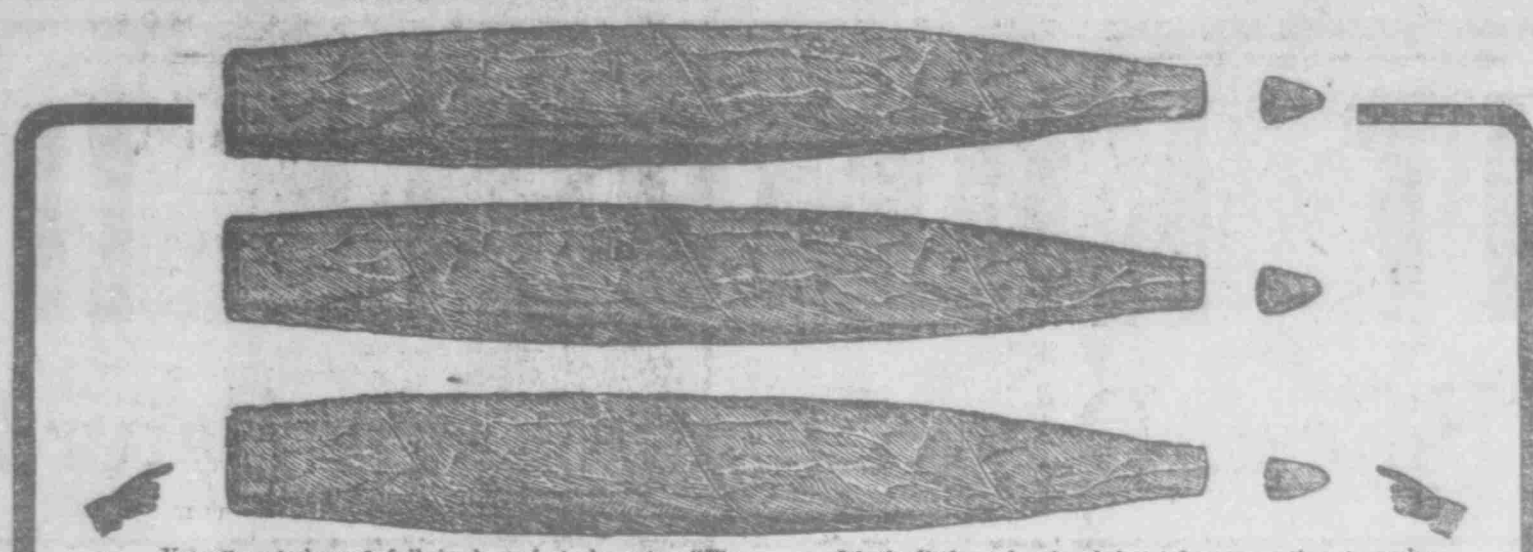
Judge Lamar Denounces Williams. "Mr. Williams's whole course in this matter has been marked by dishonesty and an utter disregard for the truth. When Mr. Williams removed me from the committee, he gave as a reason therefor one that is absolutely false. I cannot help thinking that his act was malicious and intended to do me an injury in the state of Florida and with my party colleagues in congress.

"The truth of the matter is, so far as Mr. Williams is concerned that the caucus was precipitated as a fraud on the National Democracy in that it plunged the democratic members of the house into unprepared discussion of a great national question, when in fact Mr. Williams had called the caucus for a personal resignation purpose. Mr. Shackleford and myself made a mere subsidiary report on the Hearst bill to the house. I considered that I had perfect right to do this under the caucus rules. I look for no one but Mr. Williams to dispute it.

"My purpose in reporting the Hearst bill was simply that it contained legislation favorable to the interests of the people of Florida, which was not covered by the Esch-Townsend nor the Davey bill.

"Had Mr. Williams never lost his temper over the defeat of his amendment there would never have been any democratic caucus over the rate bill. Having made such a horrible mistake, he is blaming everybody but himself.

The house was intensely eager to hear to-day the announcement of the committee, by reason of the threat of Mr. Williams to "discipline" these two democrats. After the announcement of the committee, Mr. Lamar arose to a question of personal privilege. He sent the remarks of Mr. Williams about him to the Speaker's desk. The Speaker did not consider it a personal privilege, but Mr. Lamar could have proceeded by unanimous consent. This was asked. No democratic objection. Mr. Payne, of New York, favored the proposition that Mr. Lamar should proceed. Represent-



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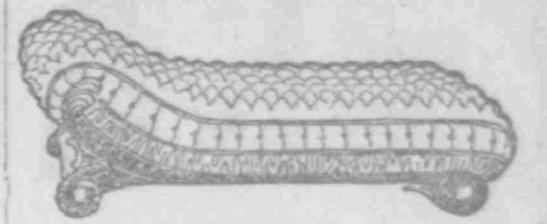
**N. C. McMILLAN**

tative Williams, however, by his single objection stopped Judge Lamar not before he had asked Mr. Williams whether he would call a caucus. Mr. Williams made a non-committal answer. The end of the incident is not in sight.

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